

Message Text

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14

ACTION EA-14

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R 220553 Z JUN 73

FM AMCONSUL HONG KONG

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7337

INFO USLO PEKING

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

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EO 11652: N/ A

TAGS: PINT CH

SUBJ: NEW PRC MINISTERS

SUMMARY. TWO VETERANS HAVE BEEN NAMED TO FILL LONG- VACANT PRC MINISTERIAL SLOTS. ONE, LIU HSIANG- PING, WAS THE WIFE OF HSIEH FU- CHIH. THE NEW APPOINTMENTS LEAVE BUT FOUR OF THE PRC' S 22 PUBLICLY- FUNCTIONING COMMISSIONS AND MINISTERIES WITHOUT CHIEFS. END SUMMARY

1. NCNA JUNE 20 IDENTIFIED KU MU AS MINISTER OF THE STATE CAPITAL CONSTRUCTION COMMISSION. KU WAS REHABILITATED EARLIER THIS MONTH (WR 24), AND IS THE LAST PERSON KNOWN TO HAVE HELD THE POSITION HE AGAIN OCCUPIES. HIS REAPPOINTMENT COMES AT A TIME WHEN RESOURCES AVAILABLE FOR HEAVY INDUSTRY ARE APPARENTLY BEING SQUEEZED (HONG KONG 5883).

2. THOUGH THERE WAS NO HINT OF SPECIAL ECONOMIC COMPETENCE IN KU' S BACKGROUND PRIOR TO HIS APPOINTMENT AS A STATE CONSTRUCTION COMMISSION VICE CHAIRMAN IN 1954, HE HAS SINCE REMAINED LINKED TO ECONOMICS. IN 1964, HE WAS ONE OF FIFTEEN TOP OFFICIALS APPOINTED BY THE PARTY TO OVERSEE VARIOUS SEGMENTS OF THE PRC' S
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ECONOMY. HE ALSO WROTE TWO ARTICLES AT THE TIME, BOTH OF WHICH AFFIRMED MAOIST PRINCIPLES (SELF- RELIANCE; PLAIN LIVING) THAT WERE CARRIED TO EXTREMES DURING THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION.

3. IN 1965, KU WAS FIRST APPOINTED TO HIS PRESENT POSITION, WHICH HE HELD UNTIL RED GUARDS BROUGHT HIM DOWN IN 1967. WITH THAT PHASE OF THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION NOW BEING PORTRAYED AS PART OF THE " SWINDLER' S" (LIN PIAO' S) EFFORT TO " SABOTAGE" THE CHINESE ECONOMY, IT IS NOT SURPRISING THAT KU AND THE OTHER ECONOMIC EXPERTS WHO FELL THEN ARE BEING RETURNED TO POWER.

4. ON THE SAME DAY AS NCNA REVEALED KU' S POSITION, A PEKING RUETERS STORY REPORTED THAT AN MFA OFFICIAL HAS CONFIRMED TENG YING- CHIAO' S (MADAME CHOU EN- LAI) EARLIER IDENTIFICATION OF LIU HSIANG- PING (MADAME HSIEH FU- CHIH) AS THE NEW PUBLIC HEALTH MINISTER. LIU IS NOT KNOWN TO HAVE HELD ANY POST SINCE SHE WAS A KUNMING CCP SECRETARY IN THE MID-1950' S, WHEN HER HSUBAND WAS BOSS OF YUNNAN. ON MARCH 8, 1973, HOWEVER, NCNA LISTED HER A A " VICE MINISTER"-- PRESUMABLY OF PUBLIC HEALTH (LIU WAS THE ONLY ONE OF FOUR FEMALE VICE MINSITERS NCNA IDENTIFIED WHOSE ORGANIZATION WAS NOT KNOWN AT THE TIME).

5. BOTH LIU AND KU HAVE BEEN NAMED TO HEAD ORGANIZATIONS THAT HAVE BEEN FUNCTIONING FOR SOME TIME. THERE IS A POSSIBILITY THAT FACTIONALISM OR POLICY DISPUTES DELAYED FORMALIZATION OF THE APPOINTMENTS UNTIL NOW. IN ANY CASE, OF THE 22 PRC MINISTERS AND COMMISSIONS MENTIONED IN CHINESE MEDIA SINCE 1971, FUEL AND CHEMICAL, DEFENSE, SIXTH MACHINE BUILDING, AND THE NEW POSTS AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS MINISTRY (ER 12) STILL DO NOT HAVE IDENTIFIED CHIEFS. LI HSIEN- NIEN HAS PRIVATELY IDENTIFIED HIMSELF AS MINISTER OF FINANCE (HONG KONG A-11), BUT NCNA HAS NOT REFERRED TO HIM IN THIS ROLE.
OSBORN

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